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FRENCH'S ACTING EDITION

(Late LACY'S).

ONE OF YOU MUST MARRY.

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PUBLISHER,
89, STRAND.

NEW YORK:
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ONE OF YOU MUST MARRY.

A COMIC DRAMA,

IN ONE ACT,

ADAPTED FROM THE GERMAN

OF

ALEXANDER WILHELME.

i.e. A.V. Zeckmeister;

LONDON:
SAMUEL FRENCH,
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PUBLISHERS,
38, EAST 14TH STREET.

ONE OF YOU MUST MARRY.

JACOB }
WILHELM } *brothers, Professors at a University.*

GERTRUDE, *their Aunt.*

LOUISA, *her Niece.*



SCENE.—Garden and summer-house of the two brothers, in University town.

ONE OF YOU MUST MARRY.

SCENE.—*A Garden—the entrance of a house, L.—a large table, covered over with books, globes, and geometrical instruments, L. C.—on the R. side, under a tree, garden-table and chairs—in the background, shrubs and flowers.*

JACOB and WILHELM, *sitting at L.C. table, in comfortable arm-chairs, reading intently*—GERTRUDE *after a little pause, coming out of the house.*

GERT. Just as I thought! there you sit poring like dunces over those horrid books. Everything might go to rack and ruin without your knowing it; and the most terrible earthquake would not have power to shake you out of your lethargy. Wake up you bookworms, you parchment moths! the breakfast has been ready for a long time, and you go on reading as if you had no appetites.

WILH. (*looking up quietly from his book*) You have told us so already three times.

JACOB. Please don't disturb us, dear aunt, there is no hurry. (*both go on reading.*)

GERT. Indeed! so that is your opinion. Do you think I have nothing else to do but to wait your pleasure, and to keep your coffee warm till it suits your convenience to come and drink it? (*to WILHELM*) Because I have told you three times already that breakfast is waiting is the very reason why you ought to come at once.

WILH. (*without taking any notice of her, to JACOB*) It appears, without doubt, that the Finns and the Letti are of Hindoo origin, and from the undeniable similarity of their language with that of the Laplanders it is also evident that—

GERT. (*very angry*) Go to Jericho with your Finns, and your Kalmucs! It is just as if such people as ourselves did not exist on the face of the earth!

JACOB. Your screaming, dear aunt, is an undeniable proof of your existence,

WILH. And it is much to be wished, that you would not disturb our studies about such trifles.

GERT. Trifles! do you call a good breakfast—coffee, bread and butter, eggs, ham, bacon, trifles? Only such idiots as you are, would talk such nonsense. Just tell me what of all your learned crotchets is of greater importance?

JACOB. Dear aunt, you don't understand anything about it.

GERT. (*provoked*) And am I the worse for not troubling my head with such stuff? Oh, yes! I know you despise me; and yet I tell you that you would be nothing, nothing at all, without me!

WILH. (*impatiently*) Yes, indeed, aunt, we know quite well how to value all your good qualities, only you should not make such a fuss about them.

GERT. Is it not enough to drive one mad? Is it not a sin and a shame that two able-bodied, strong young men, like you, who are quite capable of work, should sit day after day withering up behind your musty old books like dried herrings in smoke!

WILH. What a commonplace simile.

GERT. But true, and to the point. If I did not occasionally stir you up the dust would lie finger deep on you, as it does on your old parchments. And after all, just tell me what you really know? Nothing, absolutely nothing.

JACOB. True, too true, dear aunt. All the knowledge of man is but imperfect.

GERT. Especially such fool's knowledge as yours. Other people, who do not spend the whole day buried in their books know something which is worth knowing. They know how to keep their house in order, how to manage their property, and how to live so that other people may be happy as well as themselves.

JACOB. If all the world thought as you do, learning and science would be in a worse state than they really are.

WILH. And the ignorant world cannot prize learned men too highly. Do you call money-making eating, drinking, sleeping—life? Most people don't know that they live, or why they live. Now do you know, aunt, the precise reason why you live? Just tell me that.

GERT. (*rather taken aback*) What? I? why I live? The idea of asking me such a thing! I—I live of course, because I live.

WILH. A nice reason indeed! That won't do, aunt; try again.

GERT. (*angry*) Why I live? I have never thought about

it! no one ever told me. I live, perhaps, in order that such miserable bookworms as you are may vex and torment me; that you may repay all my care and trouble with ingratitude; that your poor old aunt, who looks after your food, your clothing, and your housekeeping may wish to die! I have lived too long! Oh, I know too well that I am a burden to you!

WILH. But dearest aunt, we were not talking about that.

JACOB (*to WILHELM.*) It serves you quite right, for allowing yourself to be drawn into an argument with a woman. They never stick to the point.

GERT. (*very angry, to JACOB*) Oh, indeed! we are not worth even being talked to! that is your opinion, is it? Women go for nothing, nothing at all in the world. But so it is; you are the elder brother, and you think it your duty to destroy with your good maxims the spark of life which still remains in Wilhelm. He has still some feeling left, still a little love in his heart; but as for you, you had better have yourself bound in leather, and put up in your bookcase by the side of your own books.

WILH. Just see what you have done; it serves you right for meddling in other people's quarrels.

GERT. (*walking up and down*) This state of things cannot go on any longer! There must be a change, and this very day it shall be decided! I will soon show them how! (*she walks up to them with decision*) You must marry! we must have a couple of good active young women in the house: they will soon teach you something.

WILH. and JACOB (*jumping up, in a great fright*) Good heavens!

JACOB. For goodness sake, aunt, don't begin again with your old threat.

WILH. (*speaking in an undertone*) Come, Jacob, let us please her and go to breakfast.

GERT. (*to herself*) Ah! I have frightened them at last. (*aloud*) Yes, I say you shall marry, and this time I insist on it. I have already proposed several advantageous matches to you—you have now only to choose.

JACOB. How often must we repeat, that such a step requires a great deal of consideration.

GERT. How much longer do you require to consider about it? Just look at yourself in the glass, and be thankful if any young woman will accept such a scarecrow.

WILH. We have still time enough to think about marrying. Why, and what right have you to hurry us?

GERT. Just listen to him! I should like to know who has brought you up? Who has carried you in her arms, who

taught you to stand, to walk, to speak. It is ~~now~~ so long ago, that possibly you may have forgotten; but I, I who loved you as a mother, have not forgotten.

JACOB. And if you love us still, do not disturb our happiness. Let us remain in peace and quiet to pursue our studies and scientific researches.

GERT. I know better than you do what is for your good; and in a word, if you will not do as I say, and marry forthwith, I will leave you and disinherit you.

WILH. But, dearest aunt, we do not wish to have your property.

JACOB. Our wishes are moderate, and our wants few. We will willingly renounce all claim on your property, if you will only promise not frighten us any more with the dreadful idea of marriage.

GERT. Well then, so let it be, and I shall go away and leave you to your fate. What will become of you then?

JACOB and WILH. (*in great alarm*) But, dear aunt, where will you go?

GERT. Yes indeed, I shall leave your house, for I can no longer bear all this fuss and trouble. And what will become of you? For in spite of all your learning you are as helpless as children. All your big books don't teach you how to cook, and how to manage the house, and take care of your clothes. When I am gone, you will for the first time discover what a woman's hands are worth, if even only those of your poor, old aunt.

JACOB and WILH. (*looking up hesitatingly*) For heaven's sake, aunt—don't frighten us so!

GERT. It is indeed a shame that you will not do anything to please an old woman like me. If, however, you do not care for *me*, you should still respect the *dying command of your father*. Though I am not learned, I know this much, that it is a sacred duty to fulfil the last wish of a parent.

WILH. (*in an undertone to JACOB*) It is true, Jacob, such was his dying request.

JACOB (*in a low tone*) His last word! (*to his Aunt, in a meditating tone*) But, aunt, he only said—"One of you must marry."

WILH. (*getting bolder*) And *you* require it of us both. What should we do with two wives? there would be no peace in the house.

GERT. So you think, because you do not understand. The more women in a house, the better. If only one of you begin the other will soon follow his example. One of you must marry immediately—I insist on it.

JACOB (*scratching his ear, to WILHELM*) So it can't be helped; one of us must marry.

WILH. (*scratching his ear*) I see no escape.

JACOB. Well then, Wilhelm, you are the youngest, what do you think? you can bear it better than I can.

WILH. (*starting back*) Heaven forbid! you are the elder, it is your turn first.

JACOB. It will be easier for you, than for me; you have pleasanter manners, and are really a very good looking, I may say—handsome man.

WILH. And you are much more steady than I am, much more manly, and far more suited to make a good husband; moreover, the eldest must go off first.

JACOB. That rule only holds good for girls. I cannot, really I cannot marry—it is quite impossible.

WILH. (*despairingly*) Neither can I; I am not equal to it.

GERT. (*unwillingly interfering*) Have done with your timidity and hesitation? We are getting back to the old point again! Don't stand there, you cowards, as if you were going to be led to execution! take courage, neither your heads or your necks are in danger.

JACOB. Wilhelm was always more courageous than I.

WILH. Jacob should have set me a good example and married long ago; but all the girls, you mentioned to him he refused; now he had better choose one of them.

JACOB. They are all either married or dead long ago. (*to the Aunt*) I am confident, that at the present moment, you do not know anyone for me to marry.

GERT. What do you say? I bet you ten to one I do! and a charming girl too—who is much too good for you! She is even staying in the house; but such blind, stupid, old noodles as you are, do not notice anything. Have you no eyes, no perception of what is beautiful?

WILH. What do you mean?

GERT. Have you really then not remarked that I have my niece, the daughter of my brother, who is just dead, staying in the house?

JACOB. What! Louisa! your niece, and our relation?

GERT. So distant a relationship does not matter. She is not rich, but she is beautiful, and what is of still greater consequence, she is good. Now then, no more hesitation, decide at once; one of you must submit to petticoat government. I leave you now to think it over, and when I return, I expect you to have settled, which of you is to be the happy man!

(*she goes into the house, L.*)

JACOB (*after a pause*) The happy man! what a frightful predicament!

WILH. The happy man ! what a terrible business !

JACOB. It worries me dreadfully ; what will become of us if one of us has a wife ?

WILH. Horrible ! dreadful ! and yet there is no escape. What is our cousin like ?

JACOB. I don't know ; I have never even looked at her.

WILH. Nor I either. But our aunt won't give up her point ; I know her. She will certainly put her threat to leave us, into execution.

JACOB. And what should we do without her ? we are so accustomed to her, and she knows all our habits.

WILH. Yes, exactly so ; therefore, do you make up your mind and marry.

JACOB (*frightened*) I ? why not you ? (*going up to WILHELM, and taking his hand coaxingly*) Now do be reasonable, Wilhelm ; you are a more amiable, a younger man than I am. I beseech you, do me this great kindness, and marry.

WILH. (*frightened*) I will do anything in the world to please you, Jacob, only not *that*.

JACOB. But you are more lively and agreeable than I am, rather a favourite with the fair sex ; indeed, I think that one or two have already been smitten with you. Were I to attempt love-making, I should cut a most absurd figure, and look very much like a dancing bear.

WILH. And he does not look at all bad. I once saw such an animal, and his dancing was really very much admired !

JACOB. But indeed you are more fit for married life than I am, and no doubt it would make you very happy. I can picture you to myself, by the side of a pretty young wife, surrounded by blooming, happy children ; how they kiss and hug you, climb up on your knees—how you all mutually love each other. Oh, believe me, such happiness is to be envied.

WILH. If you really think so, secure it at once for *yourself*, don't miss the present opportunity.

JACOB. Oh, no ! I was not thinking of myself ; I am not fit to marry, but I shall rejoice in seeing your happiness ; I will teach your children, and love them as if they were my own. And just think, Wilhelm, what a pretty girl Louisa is.

WILH. Why you have not even looked at her !

JACOB. No ; but I fancy she is pretty, and moreover, our aunt said so ! she must be charming !

WILH. Yes, so our aunt says—and I wish you success, with all my heart !

JACOB. (*getting impatient*) It is of no use trying to make

any impression on him. I give myself endless trouble, paint him the happiness of married life in the most glowing colours and he remains as cold as a stone. Tell me, for heaven's sake, the reason why you will not marry?

WILH. And just tell me why *you* won't?

JACOB. Don't you see that it is quite out of the question for me?

WILH. And don't you understand that it is quite impossible for me?

JACOB. Because you will not! is that really your unalterable decision?

WILH. (*coldly*) I cannot marry.

JACOB. Now I know how much to expect from your brotherly love!

WILH. And if you loved me, you would marry, to save me from this sacrifice. But in order to prove to you that I am not so selfish, and hard-hearted as you think, I am going to propose a plan to you.

JACOB. Well, what is it?

WILH. (*as if making up his mind*) Let us draw lots.

JACOB. Draw lots? that is a foolish idea!

WILH. You had better then make up your mind to marry.

JACOB. I might draw the lot!

WILH. Or, perhaps, *I* might.

JACOB. But if I do, what will happen?

WILH. Why then you must marry.

JACOB. Then I will not draw lots; nothing will induce me to run such an awful risk.

WILH. Just as you please; but then you must for a certainty marry, for I will not.

JACOB. (*beseechingly*) Wilhelm!

WILH. (*quickly interrupting him, in an angry tone*) Don't worry me any more; one of us must marry, not both. The lot will decide which of us is to be the victim. This is my last word; I can do no more for you.

JACOB. If it must be so, for Heaven's sake let us do it at once; but how are we to manage it?

WILH. There is nothing easier. (*goes to the table*) We take two balls—a black and a white.

JACOB. (*looking anxiously, and repeating the words mechanically*) A black and a white.

WILH. (*looking for them*) I cannot find them.

JACOB. What a blessing!

WILH. But what is still better—here are two pieces of paper.

JACOB. (*again repeating the words*) Two pieces of paper.

WILH. (*cutting and preparing the lots*) One I mark with a cross, the other remains blank.

JACOB. With a cross.

WILH. The one with the cross is—marriage. (*he rolls it together.*)

JACOB. Yes, that is most significant.

WILH. The blank is nothing. (*rolls it up.*)

JACOB. Would to heaven I might draw it.

WILH. Yes, I believe you; but we have each an equal chance.

JACOB. Now what else is to be done?

WILH. (*looking about*) We want a small vase or basket; in fault of one, we will take your cap. (*takes it off JACOB's head.*)

JACOB. (*very nervous*) Not mine, I am unlucky—rather make use of yours.

WILH. It's all the same to me. (*takes his cap off the table, puts the lots into it, shakes them up*) Now let us shake them well.

JACOB. (*trembling with excitement*) Do it fairly, Wilhelm, do it fairly.

WILH. Of course! all must be done according to rule! Now then, draw!

JACOB. (*frightened*) No, I cannot—my courage fails me—you draw first.

WILH. Don't make any more difficulties; draw quickly.

JACOB. Really I cannot, I have such bad luck; I shall, to a certainty, draw the fatal cross. Do me this one favour, and draw first.

WILH. Well, I don't care. (*he seizes the cap, shakes it well, draws, and then offers it to JACOB*) Now you take the other.

JACOB (*walking nervously nearer, puts his hand in trembling, draws, and says with a sigh*) Ah!

WILH. (*throwing the cap on the table*) Now our fate is decided. (*he holds up his lot.*)

JACOB. I tremble all over.

WILH. Now, let us open them at once.

JACOB. I really can't, I'm not equal to it; you open yours first.

WILH. (*angrily*) Why am I always to do things first? I won't! we will open them together, whilst I count three. (*he goes slowly towards the table, L., counting—JACOB goes towards the tree, R.*) Now then—one!

JACOB. One!

WILH. (*walking on*) Two!

JACOB. (*walking, and trembling*) Two!

WILH. Three! (*he opens*)

JACOB. (*has opened his and seen the cross*) I am a dead man.

WILH. (*jumping for joy*) Hurrah! hurrah!

JACOB (*has fallen into a chair, R.*) What an unfortunate fellow I am!

WILH. (*very happy*) Splendid! delightful! I am free—a bachelor! I could embrace the whole world, I am so happy—hurrah! hurrah! (*he skips about*)

GERTRUDE, *coming out of the house, L.*

GERT. (*in amazement*) What is all this noise about? Wilhelm, are you in a fit?

WILH. (*putting his arm round her, and dancing her about*) A kiss, dear aunt, a kiss; I am the most lucky man in the world.

GERT. Let me go, you simpleton. I have not seen you in such a state of excitement for the last ten years—what has happened? (*looking at JACOB*) What is the matter with Jacob? here is one of you dancing about like a madman, the other there, as if was about to be hanged.

WILH. (*in a tragic, comical manner, pointing to JACOB*) No; he is only rather abstracted—he has just made a decision, which has cost him a good deal.

GERT. (*joyfully*) What, Jacob?

WILH. Yes, he is going to marry.

GERT. (*going up to JACOB, and patting him on the shoulder*) I congratulate you most sincerely. I am so glad—you have at last become reasonable.

JACOB (*coming to himself, and standing up*) What a miserable, unlucky creature I am! I had a presentiment of it; I know how unfortunate I always am. Such a stroke of calamity could fall only on me.

GERT. (*clapping her hands joyfully*) So Jacob is the happy man! I am doubly glad. I knew he was the more sensible of the two—and Wilhelm, must now soon follow his example.

WILH. You are quite right, aunt. Jacob is a good-hearted fellow—he considered the matter, and undertook willingly, to fulfil your wish.

JACOB. (*has walked in the meantime quietly up to WILHELM'S side*) But I don't intend to do it. The lots were not fairly drawn—you had the advantage, for you drew first.

WILH. (*very angry*) Yes, because you would not. Don't begin that nonsense over again.

JACOB. Our aunt shall decide.

WILH. (*in an undertone, and urgently*) You do not surely

mean to tell her that we drew lots; that would be the height of ill manners.

JACOB. Why?

WILH. You would never hear the last of it. Be reasonable, and resign yourself to your fate.

GERT. What are you squabbling about now?

WILH. Nothing, nothing at all; Jacob is only rather perplexed about the arrangements for his wedding—the settlements—the furnishing, &c.

JACOB. (*half crying*) The settlements—the furnishing.

GERT. Oh, that is of very little importance. Leave all that to me; I understand thoroughly how to do it—I will manage it all beautifully, and I will begin this very day.

JACOB. (*quickly*) Don't be quite in such a hurry, aunt.

GERT. The sooner I begin the better; there is so much to do. There is all the house and table-linen to get, the furniture must be done up to look like new; in fact our whole establishment must be re-arranged, in order to make it fit for its new, young mistress. (*very intent*) Yes, Jacob, your old aunt will get it all ready; nothing shall be forgotten, even to babies shoes and caps.

JACOB. (*wringing his hands*) Gracious heavens! babies caps! (*sinks on the chair*)

WILH. (*maliciously*) And little socks!

GERT. I begin to feel quite young again; bless your decision, Jacob! carry it out without further delay. It is best to strike whilst the iron is hot.

JACOB. (*wiping his forehead*) I am hot enough, goodness knows.

WILH. (*looking to the R.*) If I am not mistaken, Louisa is coming out of the garden this way.

GERT. (*looking round*) That is delightful; nothing can be better. Now then, be quick, Jacob, and make your wishes known to her.

JACOB. What now—directly, aunt!

GERT. Of course—and be very amiable and polite, so that you may not be refused.

JACOB. Oh, that I might be so lucky!

GERT. But you look very untidy. You must brush your hair, and then take off that slovenly dressing-gown, and put on a nice frock coat.

JACOB. I don't think I have a frock coat.

GERT. Yes, the nice black one you had made when you read your thesis.

WILH. If it is not moth-eaten by this time. Come, Jacob, I will dress you so well that you shall look like a prince.

JACOB. Or rather like a victim, ready for sacrifice. Now then, I resign myself to my fate ; but you will see, she will refuse me.

WILH. (*leading him away*) That is a good idea ! Such a handsome man as you are, smartened up a little, and dressed in a frock-coat, and white tie, might win any girl's heart, and I bet Louisa will not refuse you.

GERT. (*hurrying them off*) Quick, quick ! Louisa will be here directly, mind and be ready in time.

(*they go into the house, L.*)

GERT. Now at last I have got him so far—it has cost me a good deal of trouble. I will now sound Louisa, and find out what her sentiments are. It would be an awkward piece of business, if she objected.

Enter LOUISA, R., reading a book.

GERT. What do I see ? a book—and reading ! I begin to suspect that you have become infected with the book mania ! Louisa, what is the name of the book you are reading ?

LOUISA. It is a most interesting book, dear aunt ! It is Wilhelm's last work—his travels in Norway. How beautiful, how full of spirit are his descriptions. I fancy that I see the people and the places, and that I am really amongst them. What splendid pictures he draws—yes, Wilhelm is certainly a genius.

GERT. Oh, it is Wilhelm's, is it ? Leave such stuff, it will only turn your head, and take off your attention from useful things.

LOUISA. What can be of more use than a good book, especially when it is so full of information as this, of Wilhelm's ?

GERT. But why Wilhelm ? Jacob writes much cleverer and bigger books than Wilhelm.

LOUISA. Perhaps he does, but they are Greek and Hebrew to me ; and I don't understand them. But Wilhelm's writings—

GERT. (*angrily*) Pray don't let me hear any more about Wilhelm's writings ; I have other things in my head. Now tell me, how do you like being here with us ?

LOUISA. Very much—only now and then it is rather dull.

GERT. (*inquiringly*) How do you like your cousins ?

LOUISA. Well, I think they are very grave ; they have scarcely spoken yet, and Jacob has not even looked at me—he is rather morose, I think, therefore, Wilhelm is in comparison—

GERT. Yes—I dare say; but notwithstanding, Jacob is a very good man.

LOUISA. Oh, yes, I quite believe it; still it requires some courage even to look at him. I always think, that he is angry with me—Wilhelm seems so much more friendly.

GERT. (*angrily*) So Wilhelm looks kinder, does he? (*going on one side, excited*) We are in for it now! This is a predicament! she likes the other best. Is it not enough to worry one to death, after all the trouble I have had?

LOUISA (*astonished*.) What is the matter with my aunt?

GERT. She shan't have anything to blame me for; I will open her eyes at once. (*to LOUISA*) You have not looked at Jacob with sufficient attention. He is a gentle, kind man; he has beautiful blue eyes, much finer and softer than Wilhelm's. (*she goes on talking to LOUISA.*)

WILH. (*leading out JACOB, in long frock coat and white tie*) Now you have nothing to do but to propose to her. Really you look quite killing.

JACOB. I am making myself ridiculous.

GERT. (*looking at them—they remain standing, L., talking together*) There he is! only see how handsome he looks—his figure and dignified appearance.

JACOB. (*to WILHELM*) I think my aunt is preparing her for it.

GERT. (*continuing her conversation*) Don't be so shy—only look him in the face, and he will become more friendly, and easier in his manner. (*going up to JACOB*) Now I leave you alone, Wilhelm can come with me, and you can settle the affair with Louisa.

JACOB. No, Wilhelm must stay with me; if I am left alone, my courage will fail me. (*he looks shyly towards LOUISA.*)

GERT. Well, as you like. (*going to LOUISA, who has seated herself at the garden-table, R.*) Do you see how kindly he is looking at you? If he speaks to you, be very warm and pleasant in your manner towards him—do you understand? (*going back to JACOB*) Now for it, Jacob, take courage. Did ever a lover look as you do? were I a man, you should soon see how I would woo and win—you coward, you! (*goes sulkily into the house, threatening JACOB and WILHELM.*)

JACOB (*preparing himself, and buttoning up his coat*) Here we are then!

WILH. Yes, and she is there.

LOUISA. (*to herself*) There is certainly something unusual going on. (*glancing over her book to look at them.*)

WILH. Go over and speak to her.

JACOB. She is reading, I can't disturb her.

WILH. Why not? surely you don't intend to wait till she has come to the end of that thick volume.

JACOB. But what am I to say to her?

WILH. It does not matter much, what; go up to her, speak to her, and declare your love.

JACOB. But I *don't* love her.

WILH. That does not much matter either; you must at all events, do as I say.

JACOB. But for Heaven's sake, how am I to begin?

WILH. Nothing can be easier! Say, for example. "Good morning, my dear cousin—How are you? What are you doing? are you quite well to-day?" or something pretty of that sort.

JACOB. I really cannot, it is too hard for me.

WILH. And why not? let us pretend, for a minute, that you are our cousin, and that I am you; now pay attention, and see how I do it. (*he goes a few steps back, puts himself into position, and then comes towards JACOB, bowing profusely*) Good morning, dear little cousin.

JACOB. (*bowing*) Good morning, cousin.

WILH. (*at a loss*) It—I—hem—how did you sleep last night?

JACOB. Tolerably well, thank you.

WILH. I am so glad. It—it is beautiful weather to-day

JACOB. Yes.

WILH. And—yes—I—hem—hem.

JACOB. Just see now! you can't go through the ordeal.

WILH. But it is unreasonable to expect that I can make love to you, the illusion passes away as soon as I look at you in your white tie and long tailed coat. It would be much easier with her.

JACOB. Well, try your hand on her then.

WILH. Very well, I have no objection, just to show you how; get behind a bush, and pay proper attention in order that you may be able to imitate me.

JACOB. Oh, what a charming idea! you are a good fellow after all, Wilhelm.

WILH. You see at last, how I sacrifice myself for you! pretend to go away, but be quick, for I feel as if I were in the frying-pan.

JACOB (*stepping quickly behind a bush*). All right, I am going this moment. (*WILHELM looks after him, till he has hidden himself*)

LOUISA. Are they going away without speaking to me? (*joyfully*) Oh, no, Wilhelm is coming back. (*she goes on reading.*)

WILH. (*turning round*) Now's the time, but I must feel my way a little first (*he walks near her, looks at her, and goes away again.*)

LOUISA. (*astonished.*) What does he want?

WILH. She looks really very charming! there is something dreamy and poetical about her! The intentness with which she reads suits her well.

JACOB (*behind the bush.*) Now Wilhelm, why don't you begin?

WILH. Yes, I shall begin directly, but I must wait a minute or two to collect my ideas. Hem—hem! it is not so easy as I thought—but I must speak to her, or I shall damage myself in Jacob's opinion (*takes courage and walks nearer to her*) "Reading so intently, dear cousin—I fear it is not allowable to interrupt you."

LOUISA (*looking up kindly*). I have so seldom the pleasure of talking with you, that it will be anything but an interruption (*stands up.*)

WILH. May I ask what book it is which interests you so deeply?

LOUISA (*playfully*). A delightful book, written by a certain Professor Wilhelm Zorn.

WILH. (*astonished*) What!—by me?

LOUISA. Yes, your travels in Norway. Oh, you cannot tell how much pleasure it affords me.

WILH. (*he takes the book out of her hand*) Yes, indeed, my last work! (*gives it back*) Is it not a pity, though, to strain your pretty eyes with so much reading?

JACOB (*steps a little out of the bush and imitates WILHELM's movements*) "Pretty eyes," that is good!

LOUISA. They could not be better employed.

WILH. (*to himself*) Her eyes are really beautiful (*aloud*) You are fond of literature then?

LOUISA. Do you think I cannot appreciate beautiful writing?

WILH. (*quickly*) By no means; I believe that you have a taste for all that is good and charming. A beautiful soul must dwell in such a lovely body.

JACOB. "Beautiful soul," that is fine.

WILH. (*to himself*) She is certainly most beautiful and loveable. And what pretty little hands she has (*he takes her hand.*)

JACOB. Ah! he takes her hand (*imitating WILHELM's movements*) He did that very well!

WILH. It is very flattering for us to see our works in such charming little hands: and it is all the more delight-

ful, because it is a happiness which seldom falls to the lot of learned men (*kisses her hand.*)

JACOB. He kisses her hand (*imitating him.*) I like that.

LOUISA. Yes I know that generally we women occupy ourselves with knitting and embroidery—or sometimes at most with a frivolous novel. But believe me Wilhelm, all are not so ; there are many who would gladly employ their time in more serious studies.

WILH. What you, Louisa,—you speak so ?

LOUISA. Still more, I feel it.

WILH. You do not think that learned men are pedantic and wearisome ?

LOUISA. How can I ? I have far too high an esteem for their works, and only lament that we poor women cannot follow the flight of their genius as I should like to do.

WILH. (*to himself*) She is perfectly bewitching ! where were my eyes ?

LOUISA (*enthusiastically*) How delightful it must be with them to grasp the secrets of nature and the universe, to raise oneself above this earth, and follow the sun and stars in their course ! How petty I feel myself, when I look up to the height on which they stand, and find nothing, absolutely nothing in myself, but the ardent desire to be able to follow and understand them.

WILH. What do I hear ? Louisa, dear little cousin ! (*to himself*) How beautiful she looks, and with what enthusiasm she speaks ! (*aloud*) Dear Louisa, if you had the opportunity to gratify this wish ; if you found a man whose happiness it would be to fulfil your desire, who would devote himself wholly to you, in order to lead you up to that degree of knowledge which he himself has reached——

LOUISA. I would joyfully follow him, and be a tractable pupil.

WILH. (*rather hesitatingly*) And if he were one of your cousins ?

LOUISA (*looking away*) One of my cousins ?

WILH. (*pressing her hand to his lips*) And if—dare I say it, Louisa—if it were I ? (*throws his arm round her.*)

JACOB (*approvingly*) Splendid, splendid ! That I will remember. (*imitates*)

LOUISA (*gently disengaging herself, bashfully*) Would you then have patience with a weak-minded girl, and not scold if she were not so quick of apprehension as you might think she ought to be ?

WILH. Scold you, Louisa ? what are you thinking about ? only try me—I will be as patient as a lamb. I will repeat

everything ten times over, only for the pleasure of looking into your beautiful eyes. Ah, Louisa, what heavenly eyes you have! I cannot understand how it is that I did not notice them sooner.

LOUISA (*reproachfully*) You certainly did not trouble yourself much about me.

WILH. And this little mouth! how delicious it must be to hear one's own words repeated out of it. Dear Louisa, only answer me—will you trust yourself to me? (*puts his arm round her waist. JACOB during the last words has crept out, and pulls the tail of WILHELM'S coat.*)

WILH. (*turning round*) What do you want?

LOUISA (*frightened*) Ah! Jacob! (*goes to the table and seizes a book.*)

JACOB. You seem to find it very pleasant.

WILH. (*angrily*) No—it is not at all pleasant—go to the devil.

JACOB. I know quite enough now; you can go away.

WILH. Not yet. I have not nearly finished. The principal point is coming now.

JACOB. What more still!

WILH. Certainly, only go away and wait for me.

JACOB. Not on any account! at all events don't be too long (*he goes again behind the bush.*)

WILH. That would be nice, if he came and meddled in the matter! he seems to like the lesson (*frightened.*) Good heavens! I begin to remember that I came only to speak for Jacob and show him the way! However that is all the same to me now, why did he put me in such a perilous situation? I like her very much and now that I have begun, I cannot draw back (*LOUISA is rising to go away—he holds her back.*) Where are you going, dear Louisa? surely you don't wish to go away?

LOUISA. Without doubt Jacob has something of importance to say to you.

WILH. I am sure he has not; but I *must* speak to you—where did I leave off? that odious man has put it quite out of my head.

LOUISA. You were offering yourself as my tutor.

WILH. Yes—but that is not all, Louisa. I wished you to understand that I admire you very much—that I love you most devotedly (*seizes her hand.*)

LOUISA (*playfully withdrawing her hand*) But that has nothing to do with tuition, Wilhelm.

WILH. How Louisa! you draw away your hand, and you won't answer me?

LOUISA. I have told you already that I am quite willing to be your pupil.

WILH. And if I wish to be more to you—your teacher, your friend and—if you would consent, your—

LOUISA. Now cousin, you hesitate; to what am I to consent?

JACOB. Now he is going to fire his last shot: don't I guess what he is going to say?

WILH. Well, Louisa, it must come out! If you will consent—your husband, who will honour you, take every care of you, and love you with all his heart.

LOUISA (*blushing*) Wilhelm you take me by surprise—you would?—

WILH. Yes, yes, dearest little cousin, I will! And if you will only say "yes," you will make me unutterably happy (*he kneels before her and presses her hand to his lips.*)

JACOB. Ah! that is then the climax! How nice! (*he falls on his knees.*)

LOUISA. Get up; what would my aunt say?

WILH. (*still kneeling*) It is her most ardent wish.

LOUISA. And what will Jacob say?

WILH. Oh, he will be delighted. But what do you say, Louisa? (*gets up.*)

LOUISA (*looking down*) Do you really like me?

WILH. Most truly I do, Louisa; I will not deceive you, and pretend an ardent and romantic love—but I like you from my heart, and a true, deep love will soon follow, if only I may dare hope to win your approbation. Tell me, Louisa, can you love me?

LOUISA (*giving her hand*) Well—Wilhelm—

WILH. Yes! yes, Louisa!

LOUISA. Well then—yes! I will trust you—and— (*looking round playfully*) to tell the truth, Wilhelm, I took rather a fancy to you from the first; but you, you naughty man, you never even looked at me!

WILH. (*joyfully*) Yes, indeed, I was a fool, stricken with blindness! But now my eyes are opened, and I see a whole heaven of happiness before me, you darling, charming, little cousin; now give a kiss, as the seal of our engagement. (*he kisses her.*)

JACOB. Oh! oh! that is beautifully done! (*coming forward.*)

Enter GERTRUDE, from the house.

GERT. Good gracious, Louisa! Wilhelm, what does this mean?

WILH. (*frightened, lets go*) Confound it! here's my aunt!

GERT. (to JACOB) And you stand there, and look quietly on.

JACOB. (*whispering to her*) Wilhelm, is only showing me how to do it.

GERT. What! why don't you do it for yourself? why have you not yet spoken to her?

JACOB. I am going to, soon, it is Wilhelm's fault, he had not finished.

WILH. (*taking LOUISA's hand*) Now, Jacob, I have quite finished. Dear aunt, dear Jacob, I introduced our cousin to you as my bride.

GERT. What do you say?

JACOB. Your bride?

WILH. Yes, my own dear, lovely bride, who, of her own free will has made me the happiest man on earth.

GERT. Well, this is a pretty affair! are you going to marry? I thought it was Jacob, who——

JACOB. Yes, indeed I wished to, the love-making seemed so pleasant.

WILH. (*looking at LOUISA, smiling*) But it was even more pleasant to me.

JACOB. But I drew the lot!

WILH. (*smiling*) Yes, but only the paper lot, I have drawn the actual, the real prize.

GERT. And what does Louisa say about it?

WILH. Oh, she is quite content, is it not so, Louisa?

LOUISA. If my aunt does not object.

GERT. It is all the same to me, so as *one* marries, I don't care which.

JACOB. (*sulkily*) It is most unfair of you, Wilhelm, you were only to show me the way! why did you make me put on my best coat?

WILH. Yes, but in such matters, everyone must act for himself.

JACOB. It is a shame! For the first time in my life I began to like the idea of marrying; but it is always so when one has to deal with women.

WILH. (*LOUISA on his arm*) Not always; it is only to begin in the right way.

GERT. And not allow oneself to be discouraged all at once. Try again, you will succeed better next time.

JACOB. Providence forbid! once, and never again. I shall remain a bachelor, and keep to my books. Our father only said "ONE OF YOU MUST MARRY."

WILH. LOUISA.

GERT. JACOB.

R.

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